NEILSON PARK

Feasibility Study

City of Scarborough
Recreation and Parks Department

NEILSON PARK

FEASIBILITY STUDY AND MASTER PLAN

1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Background and Purpose**

2. **Site Analysis**

   Figure #1. - Existing Conditions
   Figure #2. - Zoning Plan

3. **Neilson House**

4. **Needs Assessment**
   4.1 Parks Planning
   4.2 Active Recreation
   4.3 Passive Recreation
   4.4 Creative and Cultural Activities

   Figure #3. - Parks Districts
   Figure #4. - Parks and Recreation Facilities in Malvern

5. **Community Involvement**

6. **Development of the Master Plan**

   Figure #5. - Master Plan

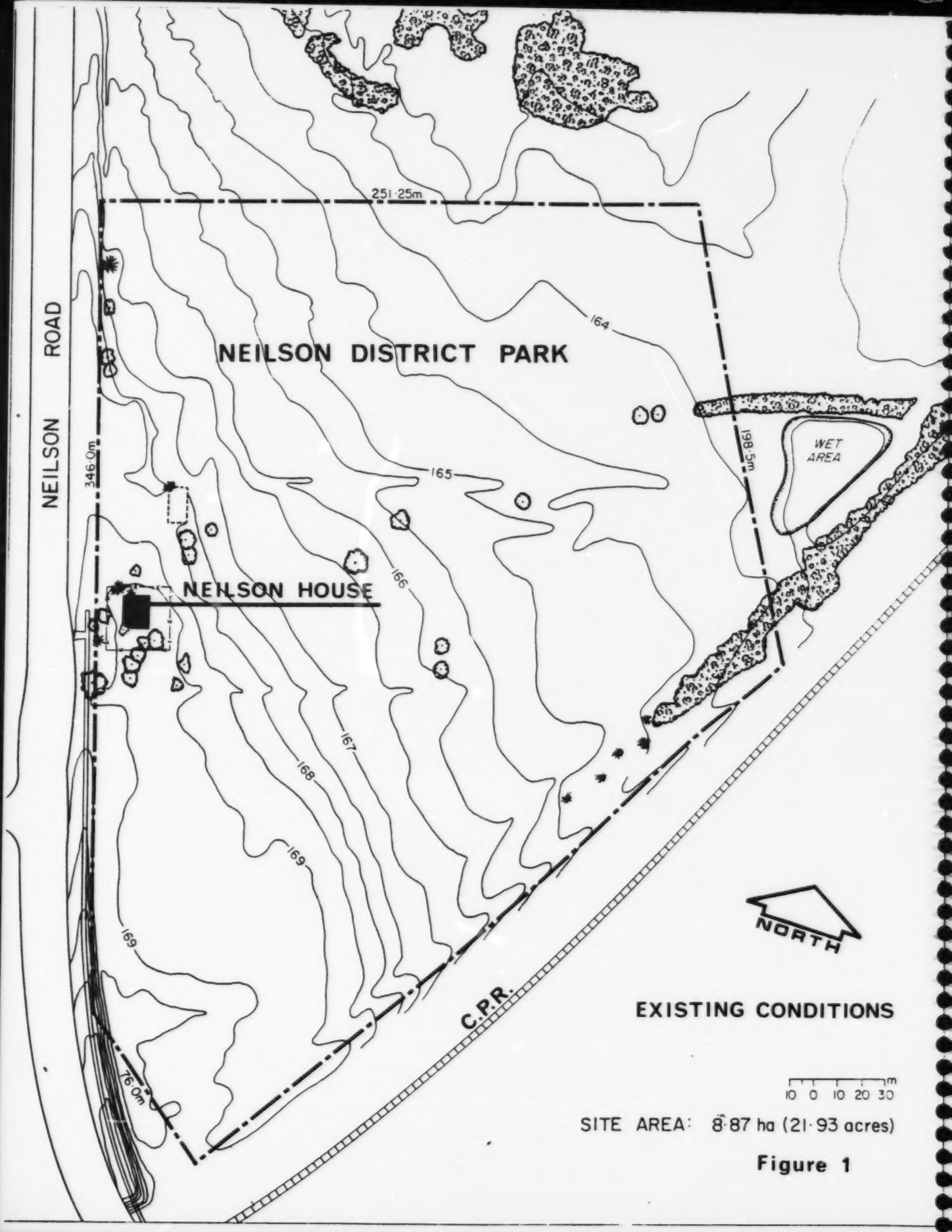
7. **Sequence of Development**

8. **Funding**

9. **Future Considerations**

Appendix #1 - Cost Estimate
Appendix #2 - List of Participants in the Feasibility Study

Cover Illustration - Late 19th Century Photograph of the Neilson House.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

SITE AREA: 8·87 ha (21·93 acres)

Figure 1

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

Neilson Park was acquired in 1987 from the Ministry of Government Services for the Province of Ontario as district parkland in the community of Malvern. Funding of $2,540,000.00, including $985,000.00 contributed by the Ontario Land Corporation, was approved in the 1989 Capital Budget, subject to the approval of the plan for development of the park.

A feasibility study for Neilson Park was undertaken and consisted of: a site analysis, a preliminary needs assessment, community participation, a master plan (Figure # 5), and a cost estimate (attached Appendix # 1).

The purposes for the feasibility study for Neilson District Park are:

a) to identify the recreational activities to be included in the Neilson Park Master Plan;

b) to identify the best method of organizing the desired recreational activities on site;

c) to refine and update the 1989 Capital Budget estimate;

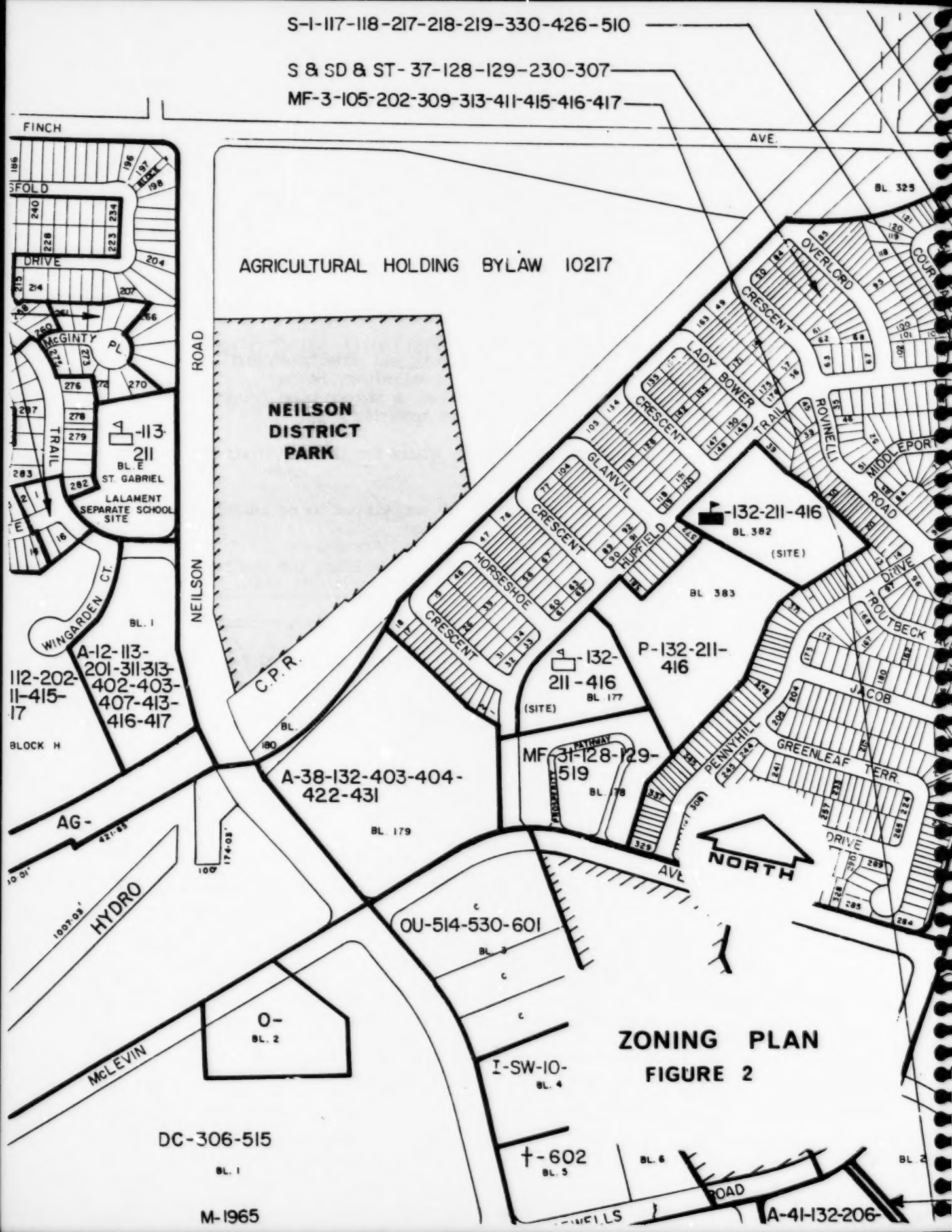
d) to assist in obtaining other sources of funding for the project;

e) to determine the future disposition of the Neilson House;

f) to incorporate public participation in the planning of Neilson Park and obtain community support for the project.

2. SITE ANALYSIS:

The park site is located on the east side of Neilson Road, 210 meters south of Finch Avenue. The site is 8.87 hectares (21.93 acres) and slopes gradually from the southwest to the northeast in the direction away from Neilson Road. In the past, the property was used as farmland. As such, the land has been cleared, and there are some existing trees remaining. The existing site conditions are shown in Fig. 1. The park is bordered on the west by Neilson Road, on the south by a major railway line, and on the north and west by lands owned by the Government of Ontario (Ministry of Government Services) and presently zoned as agricultural holding zone (see Fig. 2).


S-1-117-118-217-218-219-330-426-510
S & SD & ST- 37-128-129-230-307
MF-3-105-202-309-313-411-415-416-417
FINCH
AVE.
AGRICULTURAL HOLDING BYLAW 10217
NEILSON DISTRICT PARK
NEILSON ROAD
C.P.R.
McGINTY PL
DRIVE
TRAIL
WINGARDEN CT.
BLOCK H
BL. 1
-113-211
BL E
ST. GABRIEL LALAMENT SEPARATE SCHOOL SITE
A-12-113-201-311-313-402-403-407-413-416-417
112-202-11-415-17
AG-
HYDRO
McLEVIN
O-
BL. 2
DC-306-515
BL. 1
M-1965
A-38-132-403-404-422-431
BL. 179
OU-514-530-601
BL. 3
I-SW-10-
BL. 4
†-602
BL. 5
BL. 6
-132-211-416
BL. 177
(SITE)
P-132-211-416
MF-31-128-129-519
BL. 178
-132-211-416
BL. 382
(SITE)
BL. 383
HORSESHOE CRESCENT
GLANVIL CRESCENT
HUFFIELD
LADY BOWER CRESCENT
OVERLORD CRESCENT
ROVINELLI ROAD
MIDDLEPORT
TROUTBECK
JACOB
GREENLEAF TERR.
PENNYHILL
NORTH
ZONING PLAN
FIGURE 2
A-41-132-206-

3. NEILSON HOUSE:

The on-site stone farmhouse, which faces onto Neilson Road, was originally constructed in the 1860's. During the late 1800's this building was owned by Alexander Neilson, and the house and property were called Elderslie Farm. The Neilson House was one of the three homes first connected by the Scarborough Independent Telephone Company. The two-storey structure contained approximately 3200 sq. ft. including a two-storey rear kitchen addition which has since been removed. The building has a slate roof and the original front porch, which has also been removed, was an elaborate structure which can be seen in considerable detail in a turn-of-the-century photograph.

In recent years there have been several fires in the building and only the stonework remains undamaged. Consulting Engineers have advised that three stone walls can be reused, with the east wall requiring support.

The following statements related to the Neilson House have been extracted from the City of Scarborough Official Plan Amendment No. 471, Section (o).

> "The "historical site" designation located on the east side of Neilson Road north of the Canadian Pacific Railway applies with respect to the "Neilson House", which is considered an historic site worthy of preservation.
>
> This two-storey farmhouse structure is located within the District Park designation and, in order to ensure its preservation, may be incorporated as a community facility within this District Park or be put to a use consistent with the historic site designation."

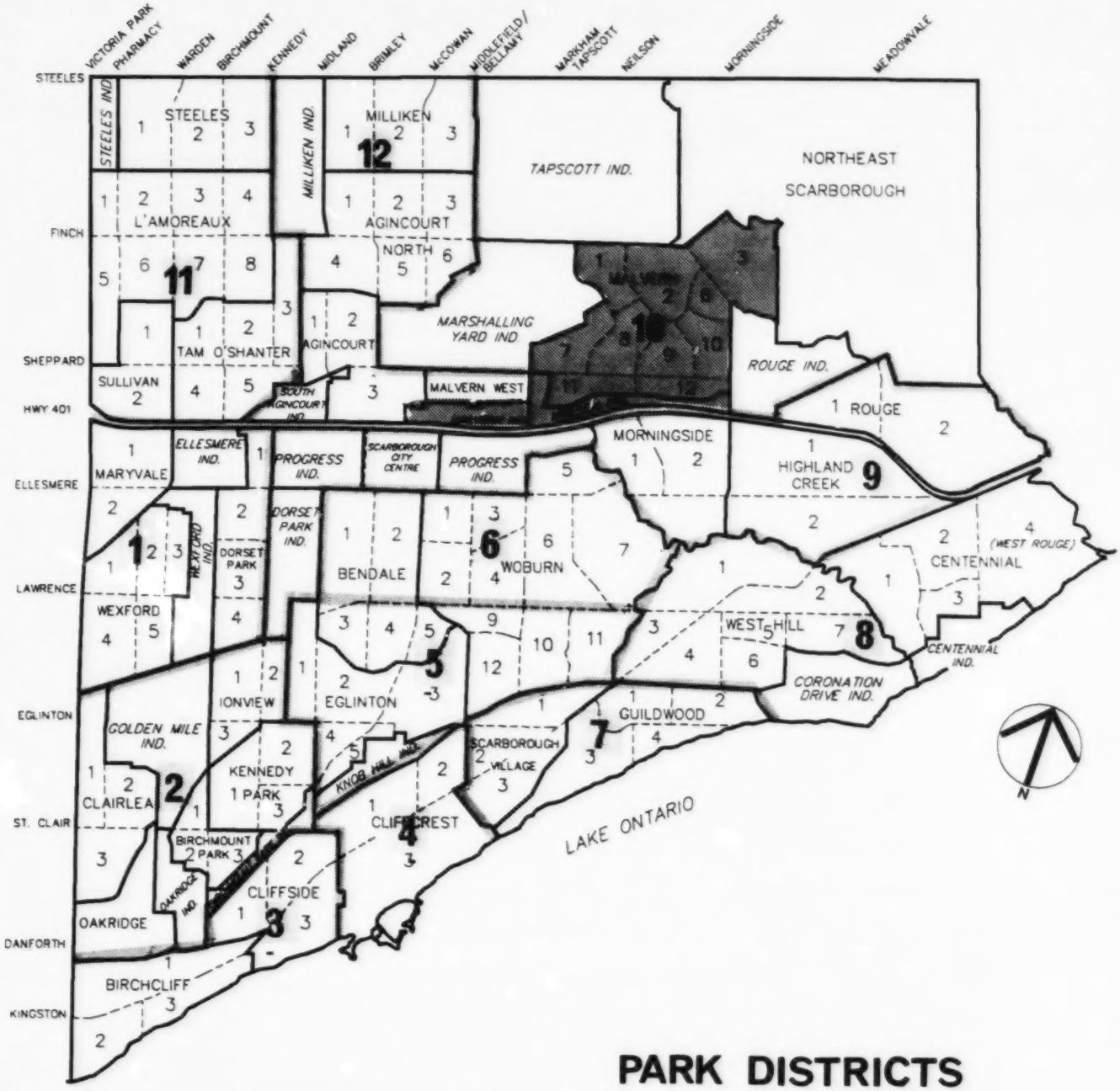
4. NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

4.1. Parks Planning

For the purpose of parks planning, the City of Scarborough has been divided into the 12 park districts shown in Fig.# 3. Parks districts are generally served by one district park, one or more community parks and several neighbourhood parks. The system is designed to encourage an equitable provision of services across the City. Of the three types of parks provided by the City of Scarborough, the district park is the largest, serves the broadest area, and provides the most specialized recreation services. Neilson Park will serve Park District #10, which coincides with the community of Malvern (see Fig. # 3).

CITY OF SCARBOROUGH

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES and NEIGHBOURHOODS



PARK DISTRICTS

0 1 2 3 4 5 KILOMETRES

FIGURE 3

ACAD FILE: MAP-COM1
DISK: SCAR-MAP

Neilson Park is not as large as many other district parks in Scarborough. In accordance with official plan standards, there is a shortage of active district parkland in Park District 10 (Malvern). Future residential development in the Malvern Core and Neilson Industrial District, may increase this shortage. In order to alleviate this problem and to provide adequate space for all desired program activities, additional lands should be acquired. The Ministry of Government Services has indicated that additional land may be made available for parkland adjacent to the Neilson Park site either via sale, land exchange, or as a condition of future land development applications.

The needs assessment for Neilson Park included a district based comparison of active and passive park and recreation facilities as well as cultural and historic resources.

The needs assessment indicated shortages in Parks District #10 in the following four categories:

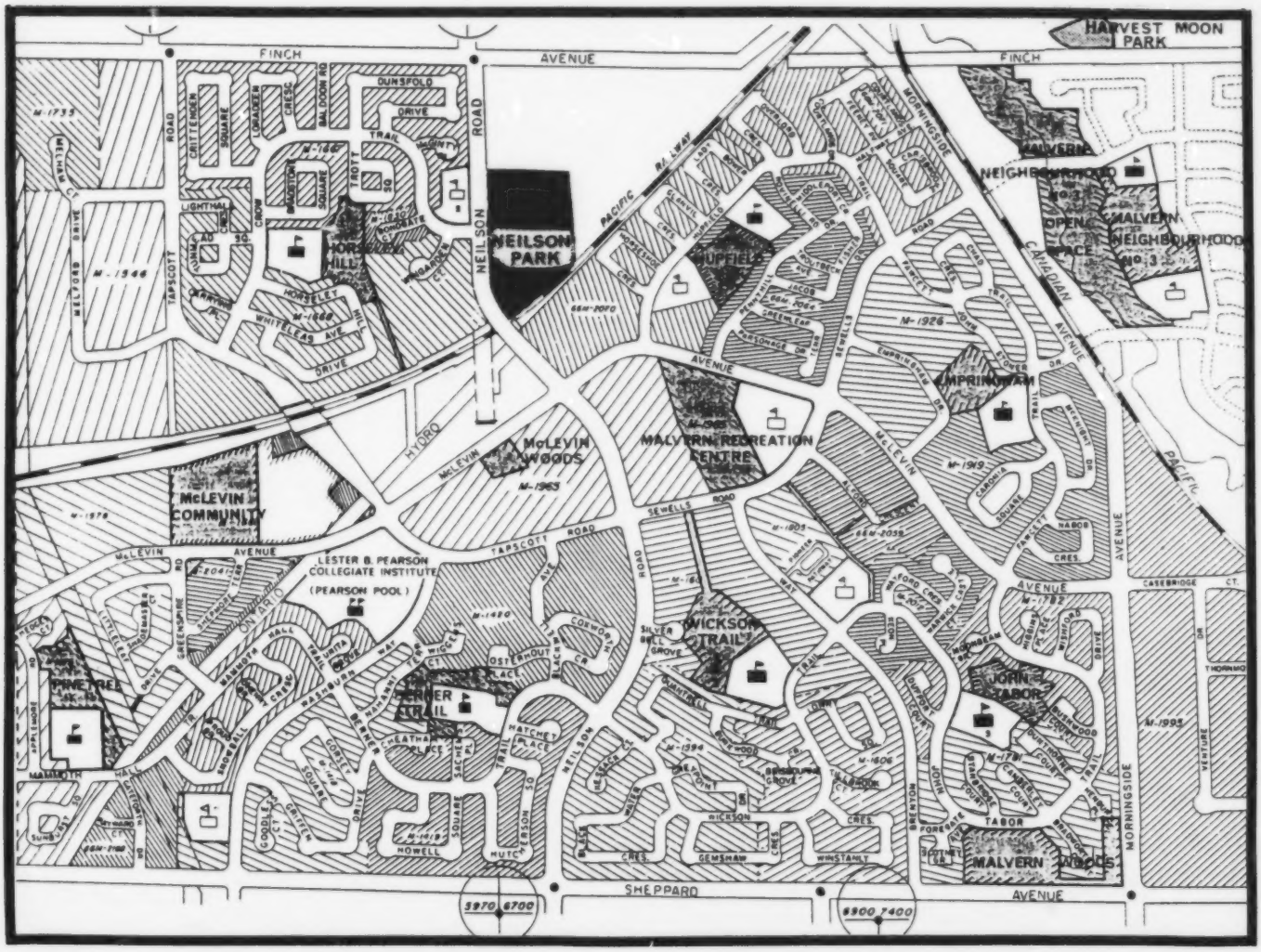
- 'A' level baseball facilities
- 'A' level softball/slopitch facilities
- picnic facilities and associated passive open space
- recreational walking/jogging

An additional important consideration is that Neilson Park is the last district park to be planned within Scarborough. As such, it represents the last opportunity in the City to provide a site for major field sport facilities.

4.2. Active Recreation

In 1989, there were 25 registered teams, midget to senior, playing baseball in Scarborough. This total does not include the 12 teams associated with the Korean Baseball League that were accommodated on a semi-regular basis. All teams, midget to senior, ideally require a full sized facility (i.e. 330 feet down the foul lines, 400 feet from homebase to centrefield). Presently, the Wishing Well #1 baseball facility is used to accommodate midget to senior players although it is not the ideal size. The following are the dimensions of the five largest diamonds in Scarborough:

FACILITY	LEFT FIELD	CENTRE FIELD	RIGHT FIELD
Wishing Well Park	300 ft.	354 ft.	300 ft.
Scarborough Village	250 ft.	275 ft.	250 ft.
Highview Park	295 ft.	275 ft.	328 ft.
Heron Park	215 ft.	275 ft.	275 ft.
McGregor Park	317 ft.	328 ft.	328 ft.



PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN MALVERN

FIGURE .4

With 37 teams playing baseball on a regular or semi-regular basis, a full sized lighted facility is needed to meet existing and future demand.

Over the past several years the greatest number of permit requests for sport facilities in Scarborough has been for softball/slopitch diamonds. Interest in these two activities has grown to the extent that, in 1988, they represented 69% of the summer participation in all field team sports. The demand for these facilities in Scarborough is so much greater than the supply that it is estimated that 14 new lighted facilities would be required to deal with the unaccommodated requests for adult slopitch. The continuing growth in the popularity of these sports indicates an urgent need to develop suitable facilities wherever appropriate.

4.3. Passive Recreation (Picnicking and Open Space)

In comparison to other park districts, there is a shortage of both picnic facilities and passive district parkland in park district 10 (Malvern). Presently there is no park in Malvern that provides a large passive open space with associated picnicking opportunities. There is no park that contains a picnic shelter or provides facilities for group picnics. There are a number of playground areas located in surrounding neighbourhood parks, and three of these areas have spray pads. None, however, are the "drive to" type of playground, with special facilities generally associated with the larger, more central district parks such as Adams Park or Thomson Park. Neilson Park provides the last, and perhaps the most appropriate opportunity to provide these opportunities in Malvern.

5. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

There have been four aspects to the process of community involvement in the planning for Neilson Park.

1. At the community open house on October 5, 1989, interested parties were invited to participate on a park advisory committee. Since that time the 25 member committee has met on a monthly basis and in June, 1990, reached consensus on a master plan for Neilson Park. A public open house to discuss the plan was held in September 1990. Comments received on the plan were generally favourable.

2. The Ward Councillor has been closely involved with the committee.

3. There has been consultation with representatives from the Scarborough Baseball and Softball Associations and each of these organizations has a local area member who is also a member of the park advisory committee.

4. The President of the Scarborough's local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee has been involved in providing historic and architectural information on the farmhouse.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASTER PLAN:

The preliminary needs assessment for district park services in the Malvern area and the early advisory committee meetings provided a list of items for inclusion in the Master Plan.

- 'A' level softball/slopitch facilities
- 'A' level baseball facilities
- washroom/changeroom/food concession facilities
- restoration of the Neilson House as a community building
- children's playground
- an open play area
- landscaped garden area
- spray pad
- asphalt pathways
- tree planting
- a natural ice rink
- a toboggan slope

The committee indicated that they wished the Neilson House restored or reconstructed as a community building which would represent the historic architecture of the area. The committee also indicated that the park should have a dual focus: one towards active recreation, and the other towards passive activities. The master plan presented in this report represents the consolidation of the views of all of those members of the general public who assisted in the preparation of the plan. Choice of the best park concept was based on three criteria:

1. The best on-site organization of facilities;

2. Community satisfaction with the plan;

3. Appropriate treatment of the Neilson House;

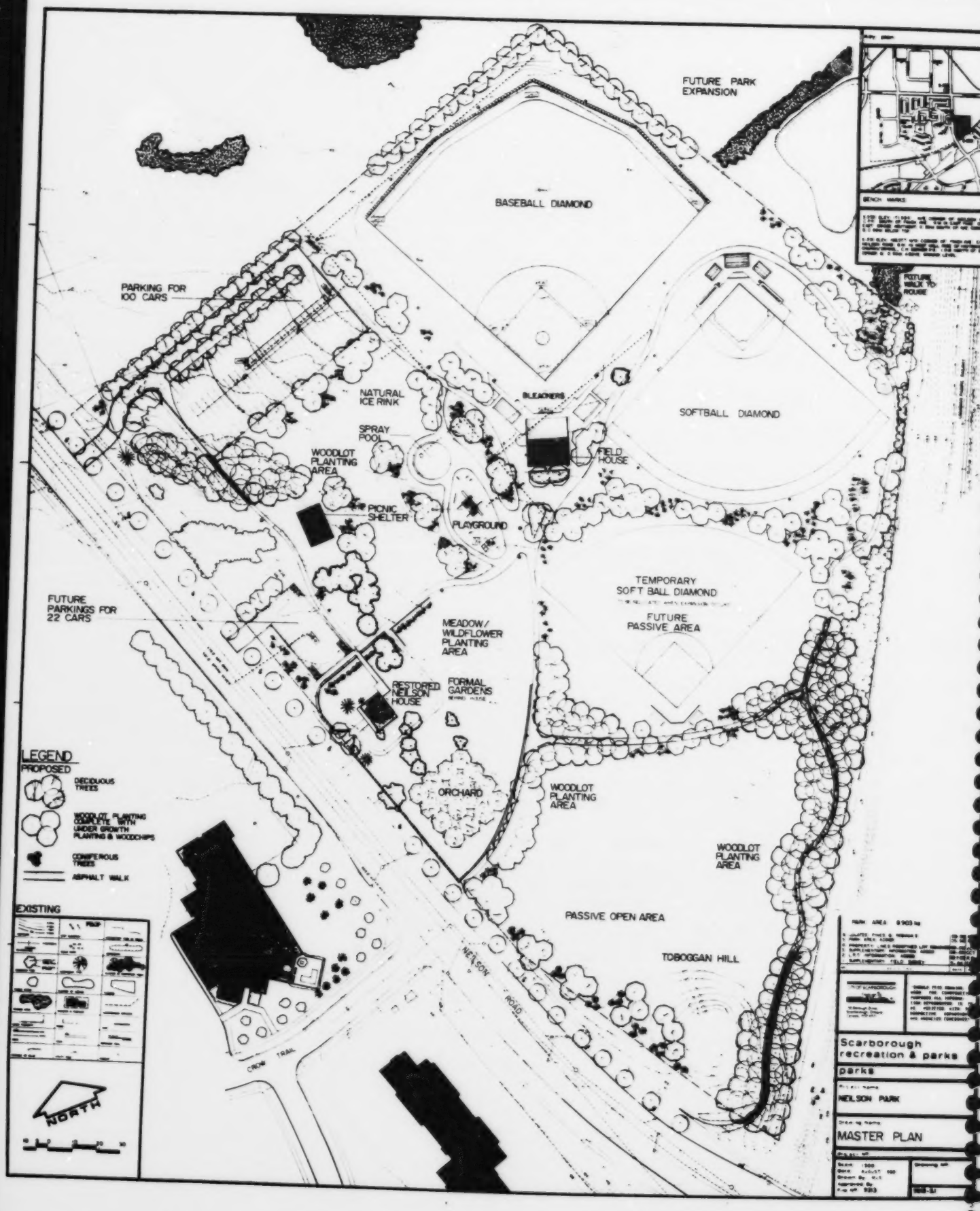

FUTURE PARK EXPANSION
BASEBALL DIAMOND
PARKING FOR 100 CARS
NATURAL ICE RINK
BLEACHERS
SOFTBALL DIAMOND
SPRAY POOL
WOODLOT PLANTING AREA
FIELD HOUSE
PICNIC SHELTER
PLAYGROUND
TEMPORARY SOFT BALL DIAMOND
FUTURE PASSIVE AREA
FUTURE PARKINGS FOR 22 CARS
MEADOW/ WILDFLOWER PLANTING AREA
RESTORED NELSON HOUSE
FORMAL GARDENS
ORCHARD
WOODLOT PLANTING AREA
WOODLOT PLANTING AREA
PASSIVE OPEN AREA
TOBOGGAN HILL
NELSON ROAD
CROW TRAIL
LEGEND
PROPOSED
DECIDUOUS TREES
WOODLOT PLANTING CONSISTS WITH UNDER GROWTH PLANTING & WOODCHIPS
CONIFEROUS TREES
ASPHALT WALK
EXISTING
NORTH
Scarborough recreation & parks
parks
NELSON PARK
MASTER PLAN

Figure 5

In the Master Plan (see Figure # 5), the north and east section of the park has been developed primarily for active recreation. In this section the plan shows an "A" level baseball facility with bleachers and lights, an "A" level softball facility with bleachers and lights, a temporary softball facility without lights, parking for 120 cars and a fieldhouse with washrooms, changerooms, and a snack bar which will be designed to reflect the appearance of a rural outbuilding. Active areas of the park have been located away from residential land uses.

A temporary softball diamond will be located as shown in the master plan and will serve short term needs until additional lands are acquired. This temporary diamond will be relocated when expansion occurs. The softball diamond, once relocated, will be an A level facility.

The south and west section of the property will be developed for more passive activities. This area of the park will include a picnic area and shelter, a toboggan slope, junior and senior playground facilities, an open play area, a spray pool and asphalt pathways. There will also be extensive woodlot planting.

Several possible uses have been identified for the Neilson House. The building could be used for Recreation and Parks programming or by an independant organization such as the Scarborough Arts Council. Following approval of the Feasibility Study for the park a committee will be formed to determine the best use of the building. Representation on the committee will include the Recreation and Parks Department, the Ward Councillor, an area resident and the Scarborough's L.A.C.A.C. The building will be reconstructed in the first phase of the development of the park once a use has been determined and the necessary architectural design work has been completed.

The area adjacent to Neilson House will be constructed to have the general appearance of a 19th century farm. Included will be an orchard area, wildflower meadow plantings and traditional rural shrubs and flowers such as lilacs and peonies.

7. **SEQUENCE OF DEVELOPMENT:**

Park development will be undertaken in the following sequence:

1. Site servicing
2. Rough and fine grading
3. Irrigation installation
4. Parking lots

5. Building construction (Neilson House, fieldhouse, picnic shelter)
6. Lighting and bleachers
7. Infield construction
8. Playground and spray pad
9. Landscaping and furniture.

8. **FUNDING:**

As indicated in the attached Capital Budget Estimate, (Appendix # 1), the total park development cost is $3,714,000.00. Funding of $2,540,000.00 has been approved in the 1989 Capital Budget. Application has been made to the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Tourism and Recreation for a Capital Grant. In order to complete the project an additional $1,174,000.00 will be required in the 1991 Capital Budget.

9. **FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Government of Ontario has recently announced the establishment and future boundaries of the Rouge Park. Neilson Park lies within 1500 m. of this boundary and will be part of a natural means of access to the Rouge Valley from much of Malvern. As part of the planned expansion of Neilson Park, consideration will be given to providing a right of way along the north side of the CPR tracks between Neilson Park and Finch Avenue and along the south side of the CPR tracks between Morningside Avenue and the boundary of the future Rouge Valley Park. This would provide a valuable pedestrian link between north Malvern and the future Rouge Valley Park.

APPENDIX # 1 NEILSON PARK : COST ESTIMATE

1.	Bulk Topsoil stripping, stockpile, & rough grade 100,000 m2		$220,000.
2.	Fine Grade, Topsoil Spr. & Seed 100,000 m2 @ $2.50		$250,000.
3.	Internal Servicing (to perimeter by M.G.S.) Storm drainage internal Sanitary sewer to buildings Water Electrical	$120,000} $ 40,000} $ 50,000} $ 50,000}	$260,000.
4.	Fieldhouse . Change Rooms . Washrooms . Snack Bar 4000 sq.ft. @ $160		$640,000.
5.	Parking Lot 120 spaces @ $1250 Incl. access road		$150,000.
6.	Softball/Baseball 2 Infields (drained & backstops) @ $32,500 1 Baseball with H.R. Fence		$ 65,000. $ 45,000.
7.	Bleachers - 2 Softball $15,000 1 Baseball $30,000		$ 45,000.
8.	Lighting - 1 Baseball 1 Softball		$150,000. $130,000.
9.	Walkways - paved 850m x 2.5m x $26 = $55,000 500m x 2.5m x $10 = $15,000		$ 70,000.
10.	Playground		$ 45,000.
11.	Spray Pad		$ 40,000.
12.	Irrigation all fields & perimeter areas		$ 65,000.
13.	Landscaping & picnic shelter		$160,000.
14.	Furnishing - Picnic Tables, Benches, Signs, Fountains, Etc.		$ 60,000.
15.	Neilson House Restoration Addition 20 cars Fencing & Special Landscape Consultants/Furnishings/ Special Equipment	$600,000. $ 30,000. $ 30,000. $ 40,000.	$700,000.
	SUB-TOTAL INCL. NEILSON HOUSE		$3,095,000.
16.	Inflation, Consultants' Fees Feasibility Study Costs & Contingency (20%)		$ 619,000.
	TOTAL		$3,714,000.

APPENDIX # 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

1. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

BRIAN TAYLOR
BRENDA FRANCIS
SAL SANTOS
MICHAEL BAGG
BRUCE VODDEN
GRANT COFFEY
PAT FORESTER
C.O. PERRY
GEORGE DANIELS
ROBERT DIOTTE
MAJID GAFOOR
D.& L. FLEMING
JENNIFER SINGH
DAVE CARTHEW
KEVIN QUINN
JOHN BRICKENDEN
C.R. HAINES
CLARE COFFEY
BOB FORESTER
PETER VANSLACK
MARK LO
RON IRELAND
L. CAYANNE
AUSTIN MOORE
ALICE BABOR

2. WARD 14 COUNCILLOR

EDITH MONTGOMERY

3. ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (Scarborough Historical Board)

RICHARD SCHOFIELD

4. SCARBOROUGH RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT STAFF

JOHN HARPER
WARREN MILLS
ANN CHRISTIAN
TOM HATCHER
SKIP CROSBY
MIKE SCHREINER

5. SCARBOROUGH MAINTENANCE AND CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT STAFF

GORD HELSDON